

CORAL HARBOR.

THREE WEEKS ON A WEIRD ISLAND.

BY NINETTA EAMES.

FAR up in the intense ebony of the sky the stars were having a gala time of it, elbowing each other to blink at mortals, or flinging a brilliant rocket down the sweeping curve of the vast dome that met the invisible sea line. Though the evening was far advanced, we were in no mood to exchange the warm, sweet ocean breeze for the stifling air of the cabin.

There were five of us sprawling about the cockpit: the Rev. Rollo Brand, my uncle Edward Bruner, Professor Borland, his son Leroy—a college youth about my own age—and myself. Captain Conlan's angular figure was dimly outlined at the wheel, and my eyes lazily took note of the tiny flare that was regularly emitted from his short pipe. A pause had fallen upon the conversation, and the comprehensive hush of the ocean night was unbroken save for the ripple of water under the bows, and the occasional strain and creak of the rigging. Little used to the sea, there was to me a penetrating mystery in this vague commingling of the firmaments, and our conscious nearness to the great pulsating heart of the deep. Mr. Brand's cordial voice gave an electric jar to my mood.

"What time are we making, captain?"

The black silhouette at the wheel jerked its lantern jaws first to leeward, then aloft at the black hollow of the canvas and the inky spire of the mast.

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"Well, sir, 'cordin' to my rec'nin', 'bout five knots an hour. If this breeze keeps stiddy there won't be no need to fire up the engine.

We were aboard the small auxiliary steam sloop *Hattie*, bound for San Nicolas, one of the Channel Islands off the Santa Barbara coast.

"We'll likely reach the island by sunrise," Uncle Ned remarked, letting his hand rest affectionately on my shoulder.

"Hardly that early, sir," the captain rejoined, shifting his position, and giving an audible puff to his pipe by way of emphasis. "You see it's eighty miles to that thar island, and startin' at three this afternoon, I take it we'll be makin' good time if we're ashore by seven in the mornin'."

My heart leaped in anticipation, and uncle's fingers fell to beating a gentle tattoo. Though past the prime of life, I knew he keenly sympathized with my youthful enthusiasm. Was I not bound for a wild, uninhabited island, the scene of many a bygone aboriginal battle, and the home of a lone woman for eighteen long years? Indeed, the latter thought was more or less uppermost in the minds of all the party, as Mr. Brand's next words proved.

"I wish I could get at the sober truth of that lost-woman story. It has been so exaggerated by romance writers that one doesn't know what to believe."

Uncle Ned straightened himself with a prodigious shrug, and said, heartily:

"Why, as to that, I can give you the plain facts, for I heard them a dozen times from Captain Nidever himself, who brought her off the island nearly forty years ago. Boy that I was, I well recall how people flocked to see the woman, father among them, with me holding on to his hand. Somehow I had imagined she was tall and swarthy, with an untamed air and a fierce, guttural voice. I saw instead a little woman with lightish hair and eyes, and ruddy cheeks singularly unwrinkled for one upward of fifty years old. Her feet and hands were small, and her voice and manner so coaxing and gentle that the children in particular felt greatly drawn to her."

"Do you mean to tell me she was not an Indian?" questioned Mr. Brand, greatly interested.

By the light streaming through the companion-way we saw my uncle slowly shake his head, but before his puzzled thought found utterance Professor Borland's suave voice interposed:

"There is little doubt in my mind that the woman was an Aztec. History tells us the first explorer of all these Channel Islands was the Spanish navigator Cabrillo, who came here in 1542. He speaks of these island races as being a superior people, and the account he gives of their appearance and habits, and my own ethnographic research, convince me they were descendants of the Aztecs, once the most renowned nation in Mexico. Though hardly more than half a century has elapsed since they thronged the islands, their extinction is now so complete as to make even their name a matter of conjecture."

When the professor ceased speaking, uncle, who had listened to him with deference, gave a preparatory cough, and continued:

"Well, I suppose you want the story from the beginning, which dates back to 1835, when John Nidever used to go otter hunting on San Nicolas, or *Ghalashat*, as the natives called the island. In those days the Alaska Indians came down every season for skins. They were a cruel race, and made war upon the islanders, who were peaceful in their habits and comely to look upon. Their stone weapons were a poor makeshift against the superior implements of war carried by the Indians. Finally the Alaskans mastered them utterly, killing all the men and boys, and keeping the women for slaves during their stay on the island.

"When the season for seal hunting was past the Indians went back to their northern home, leaving the unhappy women on San Nicolas. Years afterward those who survived the hardships of their lot were rescued by the good padres of the Mis-

sions of Santa Barbara and San Buenaventura, who sent over the little schooner *Peor es Nada* to bring them away. When the unfortunates were all aboard one of them made frantic signs that her child was left behind. The kind-hearted captain allowed her to return to fetch it. She staid so long, and a stiff wind rising, the men feared the vessel would be grounded on the rocks, and so set sail without her. The captain had every intention of returning for the woman, but several weeks later the *Peor es Nada* literally fulfilled her name—'Worse than Nothing'—by capsizing off the Golden Gate and going to pieces. She was the only craft on the coast larger than an Indian canoe or the boats of the seal hunters.

"Though it was rumored a woman was left on San Nicolas, no man was willing to risk his life in an open boat across nearly a hundred miles of intervening sea. As years passed people talked less and less of the forlorn creature, the general opinion being she must have long since perished from want and exposure. The priests continued to offer two hundred dollars for her recovery, but despaired of ever having a demand for the money.

"I think it was in 1851 that John Nidever and Tom Jeffries made a trip to San Nicolas after sea otter. In the wet sand of the beach they saw the footprints of a human being. Judging from the size, they were those of a child or woman. A quarter of a mile inland were three round pens made of brush. Beside these inclosures were stakes of driftwood with strips of blubber drying on them. The men looked about for the woman, but a gale commencing to blow, they hurried back to the schooner, anchored in the lee of the island.

"A year later Nidever again visited San Nicolas. Father Gonzales had assured him the tracks he had seen must have been those of the lost woman. The brush pens were just the same in appearance, but the blubber on the stakes was freshly cut. They saw sneaking about the stakes seven or eight wild dogs about the size of coyotes. On catching sight of the strangers these gaunt black-and-white animals disappeared in the brush, yelping discordantly.

"After closely inspecting the place the men discovered a basket of Indian make in the crotch of a dwarf tree. Inside this was neatly folded a gown made of shag skins, and a few needles and fishhooks carved out of abalone shells. For several hours they continued to search the head of the island, but seeing nothing of the woman, concluded to fall to killing otter, there being an unusual number feeding upon the luxuriant kelp covering a mile or two of the ocean bed off shore. On the fifth day a norther began to blow, and

dreading disaster to the boat, they got aboard, and for eight days used their utmost skill to keep from being driven out to sea.

"It was some time in July of 1853 that Captain Nidever again landed at San Nicolas, this time determined upon bringing away the woman. He had with him four companions, besides several Indians. They anchored the vessel off the middle of the island, on the northeast side, and leaving a couple of Indians in charge, the rest went ashore. Again they found the tracks leading up the beach to a high ridge clad in soft sea moss. Here they saw pieces of driftwood still wet from the surf, showing they had been recently brought up by some one. There were also three more of the brush pens, but no signs of an inhabitant. Finally, one of the men discovered something moving, a long way off. At first they took the object for a crow, there being many of these birds on the island. It proved, however, to be the head and shoulders of a woman showing above a pen. Hastening forward, they were greeted by the snarl of two dogs crouching before the inclosure. The animals were of the same species as those seen upon a former visit.

"As the men approached they cautiously encircled the pen, thinking the woman might attempt to escape. To their surprise she showed unmistakable pleasure at seeing them, and rising from her squatting posture, received them with much politeness, chattering meanwhile like a magpie. No one understood a word she said, though the Indians were familiar with the various dialects of the southern coast. Her yellowish-brown hair hung in a tangled mat, the ends having the peculiar appearance of being rotted off. She wore a dress of shag skins cut in squares and sewed together, the feathers all pointing one way. In a corner of the hut was a dull fire, with some dry grass spread alongside for a bed. She had been occupied stripping blubber from a piece of seal skin, using a rude knife for the purpose, made of a bit of old iron hoop.

"John Nidever easily persuaded the woman to go with him, allowing her to take along such things as seemed of value to her. She packed in a basket all her stock of dried blubber and "cacamites"—a small wild onion—and even the bones she had stored to suck when other food failed her. Nor did the men object when she brought aboard the head of a seal, the brains putrefied and oozing. This eager economy of food told its own sad story of years of famine in this desolate spot. One of the party made a petticoat of ticking and gave it to her, with a man's shirt and necktie. She wore these articles with a childlike appreciation of their warmth and colors. She was ap-

parently perfectly cheerful and contented, and did all in her power to assist the men during the four weeks they yet remained on the island hunting seals. From the first the poor creature showed a marked preference for their food, which she ate with the keenest relish. On reaching Santa Barbara, Nidever took her to his own home, where she was treated with the utmost kindness. The Spanish padres, Gonzales, Sanchez and Jimeno, and Indians from the various missions, came to see the woman, but her language ever remained a mystery. In a few months the happy, grateful creature died, surrounded by her new friends, who mourned her sincerely."

"Did no one learn the fate of her child?" Mr. Brand inquired.

"Oh, yes. I forgot to say the Nidevers gathered from her signs that the wild dogs devoured her little girl."

Though I had heard the tragedy many times, its recital in the solemn stillness of midnight at sea brought an intimate and painful realization never produced before. Indeed, the horror of it haunted me far into the night, through the cradling of the billows and the sonorous snores sounding from the neighboring bunks. Through my excited imagination I heard the scraping tread of the watch stumping the deck, with now and then the jerk of the sheet to the pulling of the sail. At last I slept heavily and dreamlessly.

"Land, ho!" bawled a hoarse voice. I was on my feet in an instant, rubbing my eyes and fumbling about in the gray dawn for my trousers. Fishing my missing boot out of the lunch basket, I hastily drew it on, caught up the first hat I could lay my hand to, and made a wild dash up the companion ladder.

A grizzled old tar was steering, while the captain and another sailor—these three comprising the crew of the *Hattie*—were gazing over the lee bow at a dark oval mass stretched along the leaden water.

"Yes, Mr. Charles, it's San Nicolas, an' that black lump to starb'd is Beggs Rock, all of seven miles off the northwest spur of the island. Watch a bit, an' you'll see the faint line of breakers showing the sunken ridge that jines the two," Captain Conlan explained, lowering the glass from his keen little eyes and giving it to me. "Now, Johnson," turning briskly to the sailor, "fall to smartly, lad, an' fire the engine. This cat's-paw ain't shovin' us ahead much, an' we don't want to be all day comin' to anchor!"

It was a fair morning, the pale tints of the sky brightening into pearl-colored vapors shot through by the silver and saffron arrows of the yet unrisen sun. Every vestige of the night was

fast disappearing in the tender glory of the awakening day. The glossy surface of the sea broke into white flame along the eastern horizon, and San Nicolas stood out sheer and forbidding through the roseate veil enveloping its surf-bitten walls. The light breeze was soft and refreshingly salt, and stirred the blood like a rare cordial. I was intent on watching the somersaults of a school of porpoise directly on our starboard beam, when Professor Borland accosted me with cold irony:

"Young man, I will thank you for my hat. You will find yours in the bucket, where you probably dropped it last night."

Stammering an apology, I uncovered not only my head but my ears, the crown being so much too large for me. The professor carefully adjusted the old lop-rimmed felt to his scholarly

which my imagination had vested with unique possibilities of adventure. Now viewed from the vessel's deck, it looked but an insignificant bit of barren rock dropped down in the brimming expanse of the Pacific. Indeed, it was difficult to believe it measured nine miles in length, with an average width of half that distance.

The *Hattie* steamed rapidly through the slow undulations of water that flashed a myriad jewels under the radiant flood of the mounting sun. The morning picture was brilliant and full of unwonted exhilaration. Our speculations became frequent and excited. The bed of the sea was marvelously distinct through a hundred feet of transparent pale-green brine, floating a wilderness of kelp of richest amber and gold. In and out of these graceful branches splendidly painted



"MACERATING ABALONES FOR SUPPER."

brows, and bowing stiffly, marched aft to greet Captain Conlan.

Uncle Ned always said there was no man in San Buenaventura, or, for that matter, in Santa Barbara either, who was half a match in learning for Professor Borland. He was considered authority on the geology and archæology of all this section, and it was due to this fact that he was going to San Nicolas. He had been employed by the State Mining Bureau to make a report of this island, and that the work might be thoroughly accomplished was granted four assistants. It was in the aforesaid capacity that my uncle, Mr. Brand, Leroy and myself were induced to spend two weeks with him on San Nicolas. As for me, from earliest recollection I had dreamed of visiting this furthest island from the coast,

fishes darted in inconceivable numbers. All manner of strange finny and crustacean creatures wallowed among sea palms, ferns and mosses, or lay supine like mottled boulders trailed over by attenuate grasses and vines.

A loud cry from the stern. A moment later and a colossal dripping block rolled out from under the keel, heaving the vessel to a noble swell that sent every landlubber tumbling. Then another enormous animated mass hove in sight off the port quarter, and still another not a dozen yards to starboard, until the *Hattie* rocked crazily amidst no less than a dozen Pacific whales, gamboling with the ease and swiftness of the lightest animal. A moment longer and we were out of these agitated seas and gazing back at the inoffensive monsters, now spouting with great gusto

and a noise like the hollow blowing of a blast. A round, mustached face popped above the crisp ripples, and surveyed us with large, luminous eyes. The professor made use of his glasses.

"Ah," he said, with a discriminating frown, "a *Phoca*! Young man, you will observe that is a pin-niped mammal by its fore-legs being flippers and its head resembling a dog's, though there is no external development of the auris."

"Begging yer parding, mister, but that critter's a seal. I've knowed 'em nigh on to fifty year, and time an' again killed 'em fur ile," the old sailor earnestly interposed, knuckling his forehead respectfully to us.

"So it is, my good fellow; but you see I prefer the Latin name *Phoca*. Strike up a tune, boys, and let him show his appreciation of music."

Leroy and I started a college song, while poor Jack stared in ludicrous embarrassment a full minute, and then fell to lustily swabbing the deck.

The sea lion had ducked his head, but the instant we commenced singing he reappeared, paddling so close that his flat nose almost touched the side. As our voices ceased he either dived or quickly widened the distance between us, but invariably showed himself pressing nearer when we again took up the strain.



ASHALONES LOOMED FROM THE ROCKS.

Meanwhile a flock of gulls wheeled about us, and finally two of their number settled upon the gaff, their gluttonous eyes peering down through the rigging. A land bird, one of the plover species, momentarily perched upon the jib boom, then gave a friendly pipe, as if heralding a welcome ere he flew back to the shining sand of the beach.

We were now a quarter of a mile abreast the island, with the sea as placid as a lake. Two sandstone arms were thrust from the main barriers of the shore, forming a pretty cove called Coral Harbor. The entrance was but six or seven yards across, and the water within sufficiently deep to float a schooner of twenty tons burden. The propeller of the *Hattie*, however, had become so clogged with kelp that to save time we proposed being rowed ashore in the dinghy.



THE PACIFIC (?) DURING A NORTHEASTER.

The first to enter the rocking cockleshell alongside was Professor Borland, a canvas bag containing various tools slung across his shoulder, and a hammer and hooked pole firmly grasped in his hands. Evidently he intended wasting no time, and called to Leroy and me to follow him, which we did with alacrity.

"You boys can get breakfast under way, for I shall be as hungry as a wolf when I return from my tramp," he remarked, grimly observant of the dampening effect of his words.

How I loathed the thought of cooking and eating, with the prospect of a whole island to explore!

Boxes of provisions and cooking utensils were stored aboard, until the dinghy was well down in the water. The younger of the sailors plied the oars, though my hands itched for the work. As we skimmed over the waving marine forest we heard Uncle Ned shout, and looking back, saw him dangling from his line a huge halibut. One need but drop a baited hook to immediately secure one of the multitudes of fish thronging these waters.

My eager gaze again sought the bleak, sandy shore. On a silvery strip meeting the creamy lip of the bay several immense white pelicans promenaded with stately dignity. At our approach they spread their heavy, pointed wings and vanished over the truncated rocks. Leaping to the beach, we rushed headlong up the sand dunes, the professor puffing violently, but keeping manfully to the front.

"Bless me! Gasteropods by the ton!" he cried, delightedly, making a dive for one of the numerous shell mounds now everywhere in sight, and beginning to dig like a beaver.

To our surprise we now perceived a small, weather-stained cabin a few rods beyond. Running to it, we flung aside the burlap door curtain, and sniffed disgustedly.

"Chinamen's camp! Opium, dried fish, and their usual accumulation of filth!"

Leroy pointed to ill-smelling blue garments and wooden-soled shoes stacked beside a tea box on which were heaped a motley array of chopsticks, pipes and green rice bowls swarmed over with flies and ants.

Outside the cabin were piles of beautiful abalone shells of larger size and richer tints than any I had ever before seen.

"These fellows must be off shell gathering. Father says they take away millions of abalones from San Nicolas every year. Have you ever seen the meat dried? It looks like the hoof of a colt. I hope they have a boat, so we can borrow it."

Here Leroy helped himself to a preserved ginger root, fishing it out of its plethoric jar by the deft use of his knife blade. The sweet, pungent syrup made us thirsty, and we hurried off in search of water. There was a fine spring close at hand, but like all the water on the island it was slightly brackish.

Fixing upon a suitable spot to pitch the tent, we fell to carrying up the luggage, and whatever drift we could pick up high and dry. The novelty of our task made it pleasurable, though we both agreed that eighteen years of this sort of grubbing would be unendurable. That a weak woman had survived this lamentable experience struck us anew with amazement and pity. We soon had a fire crackling merrily, and a kettle boiling for coffee.

By this time Mr. Brand and Uncle Ned joined us, loaded with all manner of camp "truck." They were both as jovial and boisterous as two boys. Nothing would do but Captain Conlan and the two sailors must come up to breakfast with us, and hallooing to the absorbed professor, we made a jolly party, kneeling or squatting about in the sand, eating our gritty bacon and potatoes and drinking coffee out of tin cups with wonderful zest. Indeed, our appetites were so sharpened by our long fast and the unaccustomed salt freshness of the air that we enthusiastically agreed with the old sailor that "wittles was bloomin' good!"

The *Hattie* was bound for Santa Catalina Island, twenty miles off the mainland, and thence to San Pedro. This was our only chance to send a message to San Buenaventura, so a couple of letters were written with dispatch, and intrusted to Captain Conlan to mail. It was understood he was to return for us at the end of two weeks. After a hearty handshake all around the "crew" were escorted back to the dinghy by Professor Borland, who appeared to have a parting word to say to the captain.

Though it was the middle of October, the day was summery and the sky fleckless. Before noon the little vessel ran up her colors and got under way, steering due east across the scintillating blue floor of the sea, her white sails swelling to the rising breeze and a long line of frothing wake unrolling at her stern. We answered the parting salute of her flag by loud cheers and the waving of our hats. Finally I called impatiently to Leroy to "Come ahead," and made a dash up the nearest sand ridge.

As far as eye could trace there were countless circular depressions showing where primitive dwellings once stood, though not a vestige remained of the material used in the construction

of these *rancherías*. Hundreds of shell mounds were thickly scattered between these circles. They consisted of vast numbers of mollusks, the bones of every species of fish found in these waters, the skeletons of seals, sea elephants, whales, sea otter, the island fox, and various aquatic birds. These animals were evidently employed as food by the natives. There were no trees, only stunted thorn bushes, barely two feet in height, and now and then a cactus forlornly stretching its grotesque arms out of the interminable sweeps of sand. Everywhere were dead land shells, but not a living specimen to be found.

"There must have been a luxuriant vegetation here at one time to have supported such quantities of land mollusks," the professor thoughtfully observed, as he critically examined one after another of the bleaching shells.

There was something contagious in his free-hearted abandon to relic hunting. Under its stimulus we emulated him to good purpose, unearthing from the mounds all sorts of unique utensils, stone cooking pots, ollas, mortars, pestles, drills, bone needles and fishhooks, shell beads and other ornaments, charm stones, pipes, cups, and a few arrow heads, spear points and swords made of bone. The absence of numerous weapons of hostility proved the peaceful attributes of the islanders. There were also small imitations of boats and fishes, carved from crystallized talc and serpentine, betraying in this people a certain rudimentary knowledge of the art of sculpture. Leroy brought his father a perforated disk of beautifully polished serpentine. The professor was exuberant, and said, with animation:

"These disks are very rare, and greatly sought after by archaeologists. Their purpose is not positively determined, but I have the word of an old Mission Indian that this interesting race made use of them in a favorite game."

In many places there were conical piles of small black porphyritic pebbles, contrasting oddly with the white sand. In some instances these pebbles were closely packed in abalone shells, and carefully covered with the same. Even the professor could offer no plausible solution of this singular custom. We searched in vain for any relics we could distinctly trace to the lost woman, but Nature, ever unmindful of the individual, had long since merged the superhuman efforts of this courageous life into the universal fate of an entire race. Every foot of the island was dumbly eloquent of the labor, the oppression and the extinction of this almost unheard-of people.

"Who knows but that little Aztec woman liked this life, after all?" Leroy paused in his slow nibbling of a cacamite, and let his eyes rest ab-

sently on the hazy outline of San Clemente, lying off the southeast coast of San Nicolas. "Now, there's the old hermit who has lived alone on San Clemente more than twenty-six years. He has the 'right of way' to more than a hundred square miles of island, and seems as chipper as a cricket. His only companions are two large dogs, who are as crazy to get away from San Clemente as their master is to stay there. Whenever a boat leaves the old fellow has to tie them up. No one knows his history, or even his name. Of late years he has been hired to look out for the sheep pastured there, but he spends a lot of time hunting, and is said to be a famous shot. There are no end of ducks and reedbirds in the marshes, and on the high lands plenty of mountain sheep, wolves and foxes. He told father nothing could induce him to leave the island, and pointed out the foot of a high bluff where he intended to be buried. It's rather puzzling to know who'll do the planting, unless the funeral is indefinitely postponed."

Laughing immoderately, we both started on a brisk tramp westward, keeping to the coast over a vast extent of shell mounds, which set us wondering how a limited population could possibly have consumed such inconceivable numbers of mollusks. The shore line was, of course, sandstone burrowed by the sea into fantastic alcoves, bridges, columns and caves, that were startlingly picturesque and suggestive of romantic concealments and adventure. From this gnawed and broken wall the ground makes a gentle ascent to a mesa, terminating in a steep escarpment from which we could look over some miles of what appeared to be a tillable level. At this high altitude, the atmosphere being clear, we could easily distinguish the peaked heights of all the Channel Islands but San Miguel, where the brave Cabrillo is said to be buried.

Finding more to interest us along the sea, we returned to our explorations of the cavernous strata above the wash of the surf.

"Shades of smugglers! but wouldn't this be a place for the secret stowing of bales! Who knows but Cabrillo's lost treasure is hidden in that black-mawed chamber!" I exclaimed, conscious of a boundless appreciation of these weird recesses, and a half-hope that my random thought might have a reality.

As there was no response from Leroy, I glanced back, and beheld him standing as if petrified on a ledge below, his face white as chalk and his black eyes horribly dilated.

"What's the matter?"

I sprang to his side and clutched his arm, my eyes darting to the point on which his gaze was frozen. A Chinaman was hanging by one hand

to a shelly projection, his head twisted over his shoulder so his ghastly face turned our way, the protruding eyes staring at us with the blank regard of the dead.

"My God! Charlie, it's a—a corpse!" he chattered.

Holding on to each other, we drew nearer the awful thing. The tawny arm from which the stiffened body was suspended was bared by the falling back of the wide blue sleeve, and showed the cords distorted and moist streaks of blood. The hand attached to this arm was wholly invisible, clamped in the viselike grip of one of the monstrous abalones fastened to the rock. We could see by the swollen and lacerated wrist how the poor fellow had struggled before the rising tide swept over him and put an end to his agony.

"Him a big foolee!" he contemptuously remarked, emphasizing his words with a brutal kick.

With a qualm at my stomach, I made for the top of the reef, Leroy's long legs after me. Neither of us spoke a word for some minutes, but struck for camp as if for a wager. It was a long walk and a hot one, with the sun getting the best of our backs, and the sand miring our feet a good share of the way. Besides, neither of us could free our mind from the dead Chinaman, and thoughts of this kind are a weight to the feet. We were in fact so preoccupied with the grewsome incident that we forgot to look up specimens for the professor. Seeing our empty hands, he greeted us somewhat surlily as we reached camp. Mr. Brand was pensively ruminating on a skull and crossbones, which he told us he had



A RECKLESS DISPLAY OF THE "GROUND PLAN."

We were hurrying away when a harsh jargon reached our ears. The next moment four Chinamen emerged from an arched portal, looking anxiously to right and left as they stumbled over the stones. We shouted to them, and their astonishment at seeing us almost deprived them of motion. I broke the spell by signing toward their dead comrade. The sight loosened their tongues into a perfect babel of rasping gutturals. Leroy looked sympathetic.

"I guess they feel pretty bad about it. Poor fellows! See them pulling him over. Ugh! Good Heavens!"

The last ejaculation is a smothered cry as the oldest Chinaman, with a well-aimed cut of his spade, severs the wrist of the corpse close to the unflinching abalone.

found on the hill, and Uncle Ned was energetically macerating abalones for supper in one of the ancient mortars. These two kind hearts were shocked by our story, but Professor Borland began a search among his heaped-up relics till he brought forth a mammoth dish-shaped shell.

"Was that *Haliotis* highly colored like this one?" scrutinizing the two of us sharply.

"No, sir, I think not. It was just an ordinary abalone, only uncommonly big—more'n a foot across, I should judge."

"Just as I supposed," shaking his head dejectedly. "The red abalones, once so plentiful here, are now totally extinct. Such a pity, such a pity!" he added, with profound pathos, while tenderly passing one shapely hand over the beautiful wine-tinted shell on his knee.

And now the delicious night came down and wrapped us about like a soft cocoon. One by one the stars swung their glowing lamps in the great tent of the sky, and the curved blade of a young moon dipped low above the shadowy promontory of the western slope. We "turned in" early, and the rhythmic rhyme of the sea lulled us quickly to deep slumber.

Such a glorious sea bath as we had at sunrise! Every one of us went in, and our floundering and spouting were hardly exceeded by the school of whale outside the harbor. The rest had taken their dripping figures to the beach, when I decided to have a final plunge off an overhanging rock. Upon blithely coming to the surface a shout of alarm reached me.

"A shark! Quick, Charlie, for God's sake!"

In his agony of fear Uncle Ned waded toward me with outstretched hands.

I glanced with horror over my shoulder, and saw the black fins of the monster plowing swiftly in my track not a dozen yards behind. I pushed ahead with a fury that fairly frothed the water about me, and was almost strangling from haste and fright when I felt the lift of uncle's strong arm, and my feet touched bottom.

The professor stepped anxiously forward.

"The creature was so close, I hoped you would be able to notice if there was anything peculiar about his pectoral fins," he said, seriously.

"Oh, yes, sir. They looked to me exactly as large as a ship's sails," I dryly replied, meeting his eyes with composure.

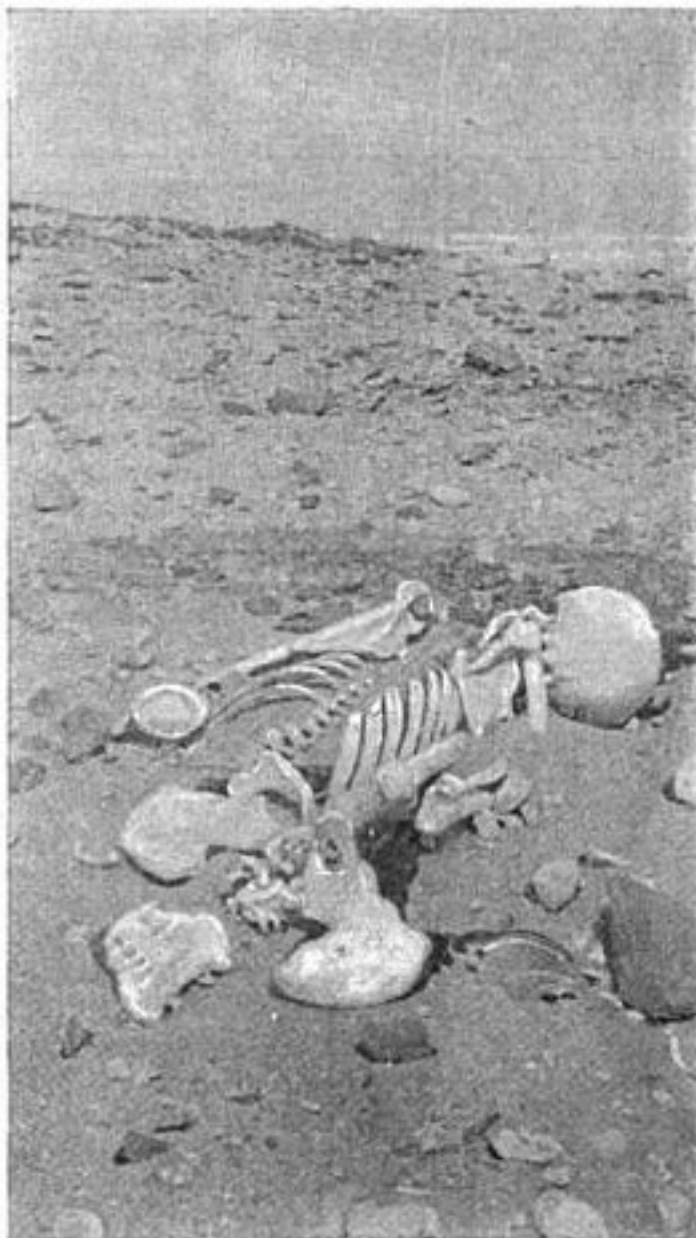
He drew up his portly figure with an insulted air, and stalked away amid the good-natured laughter of the others.

That morning we came across dozens of canine skeletons, some indicating a species similar to the bull terrier, and the others undoubtedly belonging to the small wild dog found here by Mr. Nidever. Uncle proposed accompanying Leroy and me on a further exploration of the west end of the island.

As we followed the coast, we saw thousands of shags and pelicans decorously patrolling the rocky points, and a few leopard seals disporting in the surf. Owing to the present scarcity here of these animals and the otter, seal hunters no longer come regularly to San Nicolas, but put in their time to better advantage on the rocks of Anacapa and Santa Barbara Island, the two smallest of the Channel group.

As we neared the scene of yesterday's tragedy

we heard a succession of scraping blows, and over the sandstone cliff discovered half a dozen Chinamen making use of crowbars to pry off the abalones from the rocks. Their large baskets were nearly filled with the mollusks already secured. These shell gatherers fought every foot of their way over sharp, slippery stones, with the heavy swells of the sea disputing their advance. They loosened the abalones by means of the powerful



"A ROUGH SKETCH OF MAN."

leverage of the crowbars, deftly catching them as they fell before the hungry surf sucked them under. The work was extremely laborious and attended with more or less danger; yet half a hundred tons of these shells are annually sent to San Francisco for ornamental purposes, while immense quantities of the dried meat is shipped to China, where it is highly esteemed as food.

After watching the Chinamen a spell, and answering their interrogations as to how we "Come

allee same San Nic'las," we turned our faces across a wide, high desert of stupendous barrenness. Here and there were vast beds of the extinct red abalones, the interior of their shells glinting with iridescent mother-of-pearl linings. We also saw bones of whales collected in separate heaps, their arrangement and packing so mathematically exact as to have withstood many years of the constant sweep of the wind over this exposed portion of the island. There were besides mortars and pestles by the score, and a multiplicity of sea urchins and starfish, with frequent piles of rare olivulus and edible limpets. Indeed, the infinite variety of the mollusca on San Nicolas is probably not exceeded by any other region of equal area.

"There is one thing sure," Uncle Ned said, positively; "these natives never died from starvation, as some writers affirm. The supply of shellfish is sufficient to support a population of thousands. Hello! what's this?"

On the arid slope before us lay a jumbled human skeleton, its bleached, dismembered aspect in keeping with the driven desolateness of the spot. The merciless wind had heaped the sand dunes all about, but spread no kindly drift over this "rough sketch of man." All about were the casts of roots of trees in the shifting sand, ranging all the way from coarse fibre to several inches in diameter. These semi-petrifications were intact, the wind having swept them clear of the loose earth. They gave a metallic ring when we tapped them with a shell or rock.

A still more singular feature of the place was an extensive stretch of what appeared to be the petrified stumps of trees. These broken columns were of indurated sand from a few inches to three and four feet in height. Speaking of this stone forest afterward, Professor Borland said he believed a terrible drought had cracked the ground, and the fissures had been filled in by sand, which in time became sufficiently solidified to stand upright, the soil about them meanwhile being gradually blown off by the wind.

While wondering at these strange formations a little fuzzy creature, no larger than a house cat, scampered between the stumps, and raising my Winchester, I took aim and fired. The animal dropped dead, and upon examining it we concluded it was one of the foxes peculiar to this island. It was the first land animal we had yet seen, and we soon determined there was no other kind in existence on San Nicolas, unless one excepts the kangaroo mouse and a diminutive lizard, or the flocks of sheep pasturing on the eastern plateau. As for poisonous reptiles, there were none to be found, though various beetles, butter-

flies, crickets and flies are quite as familiar a sight here as in a Ventura home field.

I slung my fox over my shoulder by his black tail, and we journeyed ahead, our pockets bulging with specimens, and uncle barbarically equipped with stone tomahawk and battle club. At the extreme west end of the island we came upon a colossal sandstone wall a thousand feet in height, its chasmed and slitted face softened with a luxuriant growth of emerald cliff moss, lichens and delicate creepers. Issuing from innumerable crevices were lengthened strands of water falling silverly and cool adown the moss, pausing anon in their sheer descent to overflow the polished cups of the rocks.

We viewed this ponderous masonry with enchantment, the beaded green of its drapery and the liquid resonance of the sparkling streamlets proving deliciously refreshing after the glare and uniform color of the desert we had just been traversing.

Returning late, we shot enough plover on the way to make a savory stew for supper. Mr. Brand had been fishing during our absence, and as a result we had also fried barracuda, rock cod and bonito, a layout of fresh meats highly satisfying to our prodigious appetites.

The professor did not join us until the young moon was doing her best to light the dishwashing. He was jaded and hungry, but immensely elated with his day's work.

"To-morrow I will show you something worth seeing," he declared; but further than this he vouchsafed no particulars.

In the morning we made an early start, Leroy's father taking the lead, and we dutifully following him up the summit south of the camp. We found the elevation six or seven hundred feet. When nearing the highest bank our scientific friend came to a stand, and by the ecstatic movements of his hands and head we judged he had gained the point of special interest.

We quickened our steps, and a minute later saw with amazement that all the naked sand beyond was littered with hundreds of disjointed skeletons. It was the most reckless display of the "ground plan" of humanity imagination could conceive.

"Now *this* is something to be thankful for," the professor devoutly ejaculated, his eyes beaming with excess of emotion.

Suddenly his attention was arrested by something suggestive in Mr. Brand's tall figure. The next instant he was measuring a huge thigh bone against that gentleman's canvas trousers.

"I thought so. A good four inches longer

and you must be all of six feet high! Who says these islanders were not comparative giants?"

He turned his flushed face from one to the other of us.

"Bless me! what gigantic skulls!" cried the minister, with increasing enthusiasm.

"Just so. Look carefully at their conformation, my friend. I have exhumed skeletons on the other Channel Islands, and also in Santa Barbara and San Buenaventura, but never found any of the size of these, nor did the facial angles of the skulls denote such high grade of intelligence. Without doubt these San Nicolas Indians were physically and intellectually superior to the inhabitants of the neighboring lands. This skull, for instance"—making a pivot of his left hand on which to airily poise the bony grin—"has all the attributes of the Caucasian type. A few geometrical squares properly outlined and labeled, and here's a phrenological bust for your study table!"

Many of the skulls were apparently broken by a club or other blunt instrument, but the most diligent search in this aboriginal battlefield could not produce a single one showing the perforation of a bullet. On the south side of this modern Golgotha we noticed some of the skeletons with the knees drawn up to the breast, a method of burial common to the California races. The wind had long since cleared the porous earth from these mortal remains, and in this treeless cemetery each stark white heap served as a perch for funereal ravens and crows.

There were divers curious relics mingled with the crowding bones, among them stone knives fitted to wooden handles. These and other articles proved that as artificers the islanders greatly excelled their redskin contemporaries. With the female skeletons were found balls of red ochre carefully preserved in abalone shells. There were also bracelets, earrings and necklaces cunningly contrived out of polished bone and mother-of-pearl.

By noon we were at the south shore, all but Professor Borland, who could not be induced to leave the ancient burial ground. Before us outspread the great Pacific, its golden summer sheen lost in the azure line of the remote horizon. A few white-bosomed clouds floated overhead, and the light breeze was warm and caressing.

We sat about on flat bowlders, eating our corned beef and crackers, and found infinite diversion in watching the porpoise, and the pelicans fish off the rocks. After a little Leroy and I wandered down the coast, which is incredibly desolate at this point. The beetling sea wall, hundreds of feet high, is washed into savage declivities and

cuts, with uncouth effigies in rock bearing a surprising likeness to living creatures. One of these is almost the exact counterpart of the neck, breast and body of a bird with an alert, hooded head. This piece of Nature's sculpturing must be all of forty feet long, and at a distance looks quite as perfect as if fashioned by the hand of man.

On the topmost ridges overlooking the lashing surf were unnumbered murres, and immediately we conceived the plan of fetching away some of their eggs. Eagerly climbing to the nearest rookery, we found ourselves in a whirlwind of flapping wings, while the frantic shrieks of the affrighted birds were deafening. It was gleesome sport, and what with the dire confusion made by the poor murres and our struggle to gain the almost inaccessible crags, we were quite breathless. However, we managed to cram a few dozen of the greenish, freckled eggs into the canvas bags strapped to our waists. There were thousands of these eggs lying loosely about on the warm rocks, for the "foolish guillemot" knows not to make a nest of any sort.

Not all our eggs reached camp unbroken, but notwithstanding their strong fishy odor the remainder made a toothsome addition to our bill of fare.

After a week's sojourn on San Nicolas we felt in a measure that we knew the island by heart. The days were spent in long excursions over its length and breadth, and we slowly gained an intelligent conception of much that pertained to the nature and habits of the gentle race that once had existence here. In spite of our numbers and the exceptional joyance and novelty of our life the all-pervading loneliness of this fragment of land in the encircling sea frequently sent a chill to the heart. The marvel grew upon us that a lone woman should have endured years of enforced isolation here.

Day by day we cast off the habits of civilization, and for the nonce became primeval in our luxurious disregard of appearances. I wore my torn blouse and trousers with the same unconcern that a savage wears his clout. All gifts of Nature—air, sunshine and the wild, untrammelled picturings of sea and shore—we appropriated as things specially provided for our physical enjoyment. The bountiful supply of ozone made our lungs sensitive to the slightest pressure, and we grew to question the ventilation of our sheeting tent, though the nights were hardly warm enough to do without this small protection.

When Sunday came round we followed the customary habit of sleeping later in the morning; only the professor disregardfully stole out at dawn with his hook and hammer. After our

coffee and bacon, with one accord we sauntered shoreward, pausing to drink in the matchless ocean view off a peaky promontory. A thin vapor overspread the sun, and hung a shimmering net across the trembling plain of the sea. The atmosphere took on new warmth and softness as of invisible dews. We were all more or less moved by the Sabbath stillness of the scene and the entrancing play of lights on the water.

The next hour held an experience we are none of us likely to forget. It did not strike me at the time as the least bit like a regular Sunday service, but somehow it was much more impressive. The reading was from Job, and the sublime imagery of the lines was singularly in keeping with our surroundings. With a grimacing skull wedged between the rocks facing us, and a stray sternum and unmated clavicles sticking out of the sand at our feet, there was something plaintively realistic in the words, "O that Thou



"A COLOSSAL SANDSTONE WALL A THOUSAND FEET HIGH."

wouldst hide me in the grave, and that Thou wouldst keep me secret!" And the awful question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" was never before so startlingly pertinent.

When uncle closed his well-worn pocket Bible Mr. Brand fell to thinking out loud, and we followed him with unabated interest. The audience was a mixed one, to be sure, but they were none the less observant, for all that. On a pinnaced crag close at hand a large bald eagle ruffed his clerkly neck feathers and pierced us with his carnage-brooding eyes. All the side pews were taken by shags and pelicans demurely winking at us one eye while the other was wickedly intent on the frolicsome fish in the shoals. The nearest aisles were filled by dozens of solemn-visaged ravens looking eminently respectable in their black dress suits, but with their unregeneracy plainly manifest in their furtive glances at a carrion porpoise half buried in the sand. Just off the beach on a table rock a concourse of sea lions went through all manner of snaillike contortions, as if undergoing the pangs of an awakened conscience. The most innocent hearers of the dissertation were undoubtedly a ground owl mooning at us with his wide, expressionless eyes, and a covey of dainty plover making desultory pecks in the sand between somewhat frivolous flirts of their short tail feathers.

When we took up "Greenland's Icy Mountains" the sea lions reared their black-maned heads and struck in a hoarse basso profundo whose sole note was the acme of miserableness. Instantaneously the entire shoal was alive with sleek, round heads all turning soulful eyes our way, until a line of paddling seals occupied what might be considered the "mourners' bench" in front.

Never did the grand old hymn sound so wholly glorious! The thunderous surges put in the organ tones, trailing them out to uphold the strains, while the echoing rocks multiplied them into a thousand far-away melodies. With the wild creatures from "the springs of the sea" and the birds of the land hearkening, we again burst forth in Selkirk's majestic complaint:

"I am monarch of all I survey,
My right there is none to dispute;
From the centre all round to the sea
I am lord of the fowl and the brute.

"O Solitude, where are the charms
That sages have seen in thy face?
Better dwell in the midst of alarms
Than reign in this horrible place."

By afternoon the wind veered to the south, and swept low and moaningly over the shivering

dunes. For hours a continuous flock of sea fowl winged past the tent in the coppery illumination from the veiled sun. There were unnumbered thousands of these birds, and their cries sounded strange and solemnly prophetic. At sundown there was an ominous piling of swollen clouds in the west, above wide pools of throbbing light. One by one the neighboring islands were muffled in gloom, until the bleak slip of land we inhabited seemed all that was left of the great spinning earth. Across the universe of boiling waters serpentine flashes of lightning ripped the intense blackness pressing down from the sky, and the sea took on a doleful plaint to the indistinct mutterings of thunder.

At midnight the storm broke, and I never remember hearing such thunder. There came an appalling dash of rain and wind, mingled with the terrific bellowing of the surf on the rocks. So tremendous was the jar and the uproar that the island appeared shaken to its foundation. It was only with the utmost exertion that we managed to keep the tent upright, but there was no more sleep for any of us. The sunrise, however, was well worth being up to see. It was altogether the most marvelous we had yet witnessed. Not a hint of the storm remained, aside from a rain-bathed freshness over all, even to the sea itself, which was all a-sparkle in the radiating light.

After a lengthened barter with the "boss" Chinaman we secured a day's loan of the skiff for the sum of "fo' bittee," and stuffing stray morsels of food in our pockets, we made off for the day.

Rounding the narrow peninsula that forms the south confine of Coral Harbor, we rowed as close to the shore as the breakers would permit. The unfrequented caverns, abounding in rare algæ and wriggling crustacean creatures, furnished us inexhaustible objects of interest. Our eyes were never weary searching the diaphanous water where countless scarlet, gold and argent fish flashed through the submarine groves. On a bed of exquisitely tinted shells and pebbles lay a pair of rusty iron rowlocks, seemingly within twenty feet of the surface, but upon sounding, the actual depth proved to be eighty fathoms.

The ragged sea wall was all along scaly with shellfish, each with its valve opened to drink in the falling spray. Multitudes of gulls and shags were everywhere to be seen, but as we neared them they flew away with a wild clatter. Now and again from some castellated projection we were watched by a kingly eagle.

The beaches we saw were too steep to make good landing ground, but we finally took advantage of an ingoing breaker, which set us pretty well up on the sand.



THE STONE FOREST.

Having fixed things to our satisfaction, we made our way cautiously along a backbone of sandstone running far out beyond the frothing breakers. Being now ravenously hungry, we chose the smoothest surface at hand and stretched ourselves to dry, and munch our apples and biscuit. The direct rays of the sun set us to steaming at a great rate, and provoked an imperative drowsiness. I fell asleep, and Leroy must have done likewise, for I was vaguely conscious of his deep breathing beside me.

An hour or so later my eyelids slowly unclosed in a delicious half-awakening, and the next instant I was straining my sight at what I took to be the tails of two enormous spotted snakes floating aimlessly out from a submerged boulder. While absorbed in watching them a third undulatory shape was thrust like a tongue from the crevice, and was followed by a fourth and a fifth slimy, elongated tentacle, all of which broadened toward the same focus. When my curiosity was

at its height a disgusting, jellylike mass detached itself from the rock and moved slowly forward by the aid of its eight feelers, three of which I had not perceived before.

I now realized that the bundle of "snakes" was in reality the antennæ of one round, glutinous centre possessed of two large, watery eyes which glared voraciously. Though I had never before seen this hideous and formidable monster, I was convinced it was the octopus, commonly called the "devilfish," and known to legendary lore as the "Kraken."

Seeing the creature about to shamle off, I called sharply to Leroy. There was a loud splash and a choking cry in response. To my dismay I saw him struggling and sputtering in the water. In his violent awakening he had rolled off into the pool inhabited by the devilfish. I had read frightful accounts of its deadly embrace, and my presence of mind forsook me. I shrieked wildly:

"Don't climb up here. Go farther down. For mercy's sake, hurry! He's right under you!"

"I'm glad *something* is under me, for it seems a deucedly long way to the bottom! Lend a hand, can't you, and don't be so infernally scared!"

He extended one hand, while the other clutched the notched wall, his toes barely touching the shell-like boulder underneath. My eyes fell upon his shoes and socks drying beside me in the sun. Even now the blistering thongs of the octopus might be reaching for his bare flesh! Fortunately he was ignorant of its malevolent presence. I remembered also that he could not swim a stroke. We both strained every muscle; but not until he had felt his way some yards down the submarine ledge was it possible for our united efforts to get him up the slippery stones.

When Leroy scrambled to his feet I submitted to a briny but dramatic embrace. Then breaking away, I ran to look for the devilfish. He was nowhere in sight, but there was a slight movement of the water where the monster had buried itself in a cleft of the rock.

When I explained to Leroy he stopped wringing his clothes and stared open-mouthed, then laughed extravagantly.

"The governor will never forgive me for not allowing myself to be thoroughly wound up and sucked dry for the benefit of science. Think what a beautiful exemplification of the polyp's wonderful apparatus for exhausting air! Really, Charlie"—with whimsical gravity—"you did wrong to help me escape. The best we can do now is to keep mum on the subject."

And odd as it may appear, we carried out the

suggestion, saying nothing about the adventure, even when the Chinamen a few days after hauled in their net only to find an octopus writhing among a score of other fish. Under the professor's tutelage we had a chance to come to a pretty good understanding of the creature's remarkable anatomy. Every snakelike feeler had on its under surface rows of suckers which act like cupping glasses to draw the blood of its victim. These tentacles are hollow, and supplied with sharp points on the ends. In fact, the whole shapeless, scabrous heap is quite revolting enough to give rise to the superstitious horror with which the "sea vampire" has ever been regarded.

Much of the second week we spent investigating the eastern portion of the island. Here a smooth tableland of thousands of acres is covered with nutritious grass and moss, where bands of sheep graze the year through. Unlike the dusky, burr-fringed flocks on the mainland, these animals were picturesquely white, and as nimble and wild as goats. No shepherd watches them day or night, and there is no dog to tease or wild beast to torture or kill them. Indeed, every one of these Channel Islands might truthfully be deemed a sheep's paradise. When the season comes round shearers are sent from Ventura or Santa Barbara, and aside from this periodical attention the owners reckon not of the welfare of these Crusoe-like island flocks.

The sheep on Anacapa are a queer lot. They are ignorant of the taste of water, there being none on the island. They get sufficient moisture from the dew and fog on the grass and succulent moss. When taken off Anacapa these sheep have been known to perish with thirst beside running water.

On the morning of our second Saturday on San Nicolas Professor Borland seemed in an unusual hurry to be off on his customary tramp. The rest of us lingered behind, expecting every minute to catch a glimpse of the white sail of the *Hattie*. As the day waned our wonderment grew into positive uneasiness.

"It cannot be possible she is not coming!" uncle anxiously exclaimed, stopping in his impatient march to and fro on the beach, and directing a troubled glance at us. I knew he was picturing the disappointment of the dear home folks, who would be sure to look for us that night.

The sun went down thirstily, leaving a fiery west that was like burnished brass. While we sat at supper the professor returned. He greeted us with enforced cheerfulness, and I fancied his eyes evaded the grave regard of my uncle and the minister.

"The *Hattie* did not come!" uncle abruptly began.

"So I see, so I see! Well, we'll have to make the best of it till she does. I'm sure she couldn't leave us in a more charming spot. Why, that graveyard is a regular archaeological mine! I could spend the rest of my days there."

"So I supposed. Now, will you tell us just when we may expect Captain Conlan?"

There was a cold insistence in Uncle Ned's voice that caused the perspiring professor to wince and change color.

"Certainly, Bruner. He'll be here without fail a week from to-day. The fact is, when I wrote to my wife I told her to inform Mrs. Bruner we had made up our minds to lengthen our stay to three weeks on the island. What more can you ask?" the professor added, irritably.

The two friends held hands a moment in silence, then Uncle Ned, quite pale and collected, replied, in a low voice:

"I think you have behaved in a shamefully selfish and inconsiderate manner, and our business connection ends with to-day. The relics we find the coming week will be individual property."

He glanced at Mr. Brand as if for confirmation. The latter quickly responded:

"Quite right, my dear fellow. It is the least we can exact in common justice to ourselves."

With this the two walked apart, leaving the professor for the instant astonished and visibly perturbed.

It puzzled me at the time, and it has since, to decide in my own mind whether Professor Borland had the vaguest realization of having done a dishonorable act in compelling us to remain another week on San Nicolas. After the conversation related he seemed to have totally forgotten the whole affair. He resumed his former *distracted* or enthusiastic manner, according to his mood.

This state of affairs might have proved dampening to our spirits under ordinary circumstances, but it must be confessed Leroy and I felt but a momentary depression in consequence. The splendid freedom that was ours on the island had purged our nerves of every trace of supersensitiveness, and we continued to quaff royal bumpers of the true wine of life—the untainted air of the ocean.

The ensuing Sabbath passed much as the previous one had done, but as the night deepened and the professor did not put in an appearance some fear was expressed lest he were lost or had

met with an accident. After waiting another half-hour we agreed to go in search of him, each of us promising to fire a shot in case he should be found.

Leroy and I kept together, stumbling awkwardly in the dark over drifts of sand and ditches strewn with shell and rock. In the obscure light the most commonplace object presented a weird unreality which kept us all a-tingle with anticipation of something yet more awesome.

Finally we half slid, half fell down a smooth embankment into a basinlike hollow, wherein we met a sight that was truly terrifying. The place was alive with spectral lights, revealing with frightful distinctness the fleshless grin of numberless skulls, and the ribby skeletons strewn about piece by piece, and all softly aflame. These lambent lights went out, were rekindled, shifted, danced and flickered, all in the same breath—a hideous play upon ghastly relics whose very nakedness was a dumb protest to the unholy illumination.

Suddenly the full moon emerged from the fog, its familiar beams dispelling the strange phosphorescent display. Almost immediately the place regained much of its daytime appearance of unmitigated desolateness.

"Hark! There's a gun. I hope father is all right. We'd better go straight back."

I think neither of us was sorry to get away from that uncanny valley. We retraced our steps with all speed, and, shaping our course by the friendly beacon, we had no further difficulty in reaching camp.

We were all glad enough to get back with our number unbroken, though the professor admitted that for a time he thought his case hopeless. He was completely lost in the fog, and had it not been for the stentorian shouts of Mr. Brand would probably have been forced to bivouac on the sand dunes the remainder of the night.

The last three days of our outing were dismal enough, the rain falling in almost uninterrupted showers, making it impossible to kindle a camp fire. Fortunately we could share with the Chinamen the use of their tiny stove in the cabin, and were thus enabled to get something warm now and then. The worst of it was, our provisions ran short, so that between wet, cold and hunger there was genuine rejoicing when the *Hattie* steamed into Coral Harbor. Only the professor lingered wistfully on shore until the last of his archaeological treasures was snugly aboard, when we bade a long farewell to San Nicolas.